AP Broadcasters Concerned About Contempt Charge

SCRANTON, Pa. (AP)— The Associated Press Broadcasters Association expressed its concern Wednesday about a congressional committee recommendation that the Columbia Broadcasting System and its president, Dr. Frank Stanton, be cited for contempt of Congress.

A statement issued by APBA President Thomas Powell, news director of station WDAU-TV in Scranton, urged the House of Representatives to consider the matter carefully before voting on the Commerce Committee recommendation.

The committee acted last month after Stanton refused to surrender material subponaed by the committee in connection with the CBS documentary, "The Selling of the Pentagon."

Powell said, "The Associated Press Broadcasters Association, representing more than 3,000 radio and television stations, is gravely concerned by the recommendation . . .

"The House of Representatives would thrust on broadcasters a smothering blanket of government interference by voting to sustain the judgment of its Commerce Committee that CBS can be compelled to produce nonbroadcast material so that the network's editorial judgments can be subjected to official review.

"The issue is nothing less than the sanctity of the First Amendment.